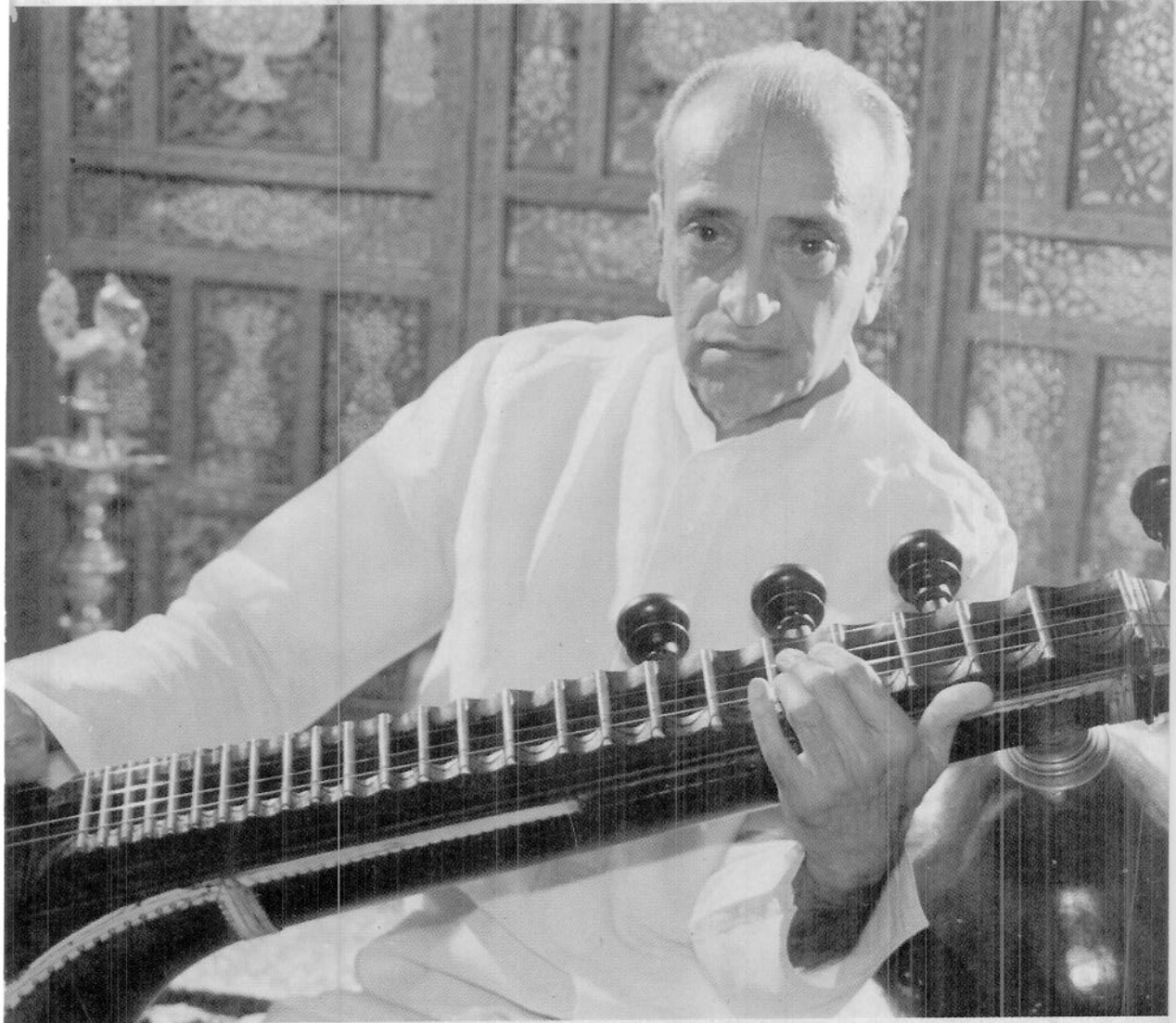


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Journal on Music and Dance

S.N.Chandrasekhar
67 Basappa Layout
Bangalore 560019 ☎ 6675758
Editor

Bangalore K Venkatram
183, 8th Cross, II Bl, Jayanagar
Bangalore 560011 ☎ 6630079
Associate Editor

N.Sundarraaj
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar
Bangalore 560009 ☎ 2263696
Managing Editor

B. Rajashekar
☎ 2216459
Advertising Manager

Representatives
Ganapathi Bhat
Hubli -Dharwar
K. Ramamurthy Rao
Mysore
Geeta Raja
9 Chhaya, Jam-e-Jamshed Road
Matunga, Bombay 400019
☎ 412 2074

Annual Subscription: Rs 50-00
Three Years: Rs 140-00

Please send all remittances to
PHOENIX
The Circulation Manager
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar
Bangalore 560009 ☎ 2263696
(Cheques to be drawn on
'PHOENIX')

RN 45468/87

Vol 1

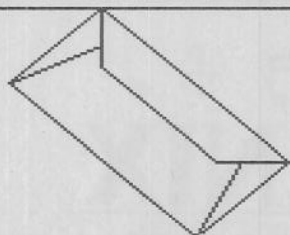
July - August 1996

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Cover Photo by
N.SUNDARRAJ



READERS Write

I am deeply impressed to read your article. M.S. the Living Legend. The title is most apt. The contents attract the reader by choice words. The image of DVG dancing in raptures before MS remains ever green in mind.

*H.N.Rajanna
Bhadravathi*

M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI

It is really unfortunate that our Government (Central) has not conferred country's highest on 'M.S.'. As I know, that there was some technical difficulty in awarding 'Bharath Rathna' and now I am told the way is clear, after the Supreme Court dismissed the petition filed before it, against awarding titles.

If one attempts to write about M.S.'s achievements, her contribution to Music and also for charitable purposes, it amounts carrying coal to New Castle. M.S. is in the evening of her life and fortunately her husband is also alive.

It is also strange and surprising that hundreds of Music Sabhas all over the country have so far not pressed our government about the award.

Will the Music Sabhas and personalities in Music field and others wake-up?

*B. Visweswara Rao
Bangalore*

Many organisations in and around Bangalore are organising music festivals giving good opportunities for the listening public and the artistes themselves in propagating and encouraging classical music.

Some organisations fill the programmes with artistes from outside Karnataka. One such is at Odakathur Mutt wherein all the fourteen programmes are studded with outside artistes.

We are not against any artiste from any region participating in Bangalore. But under the garb of such celebrations, there should not be monopolies. Even among the accompanying artistes there are only 14 from this region while twice of them are outsiders.

Organisers should know that Karnataka has quite a number of renowned, artistes. It is time that organisations like Ganakala Parishat and even the media take up such issues, so that classical music becomes more popular irrespective of language, region and such other bias.

*Anantharam
Bangalore*

I have gone through few numbers of your journal on music and dance, which is giving good coverage to the musicians, dance artistes and associated members of this faculty. The articles are of superb standard and highly informative. This part had been without such a magazine and sans reportage of various cultural events going on from time to time.

May the journal raise up to the stature of high order enabling us to know the profile of the high status of performers in all fields.

Wishing it a grand success,

*S.V.R.Iyengar
Bangalore*

Obituary Srigandha

Srigandha, flutist died on August 4, 96 at Bangalore. He was 25.

Srigandha gave his first performance in 1984 and had won the award in the competition by Bangalore Gayana Samaja. He was the recipient of the Karnataka Government Scholarship and Silver Flute award by the Madras Music Academy in 1994.

He had performed in a number of concerts in Karnataka and outside. He was a regular participant at the Thiruvayyaru festival.

Srigandha who was the student of M.R.Doreswamy of Bangalore was the son of N.Srinivasiah, a great lover of music and grand son of Somanatha Bhagavathar (of Yakshagana fame).

He was being guided by Lalgudi G.J ayaraman. He had recorded many cassettes which were well received.

With his sudden death Karnataka has lost a very talented flutist. Phoenix conveys its condolence to the bereaved family, and pray God to give enough strength to his parents to bear the loss.

Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and early coverage, make them brief.

Editorial

Towards Excellence in Dance

The city recently saw the birth of another Pratishtana, taking the name of Karnataka Nritya Kala Pratishtana as distinct from the Karnataka Nrityakala Parishath which has been in existence for over a decade now. The promoters of the new organisation, however, make it emphatically clear that theirs is no rival to the Parishath of which many of them are themselves ardent members.

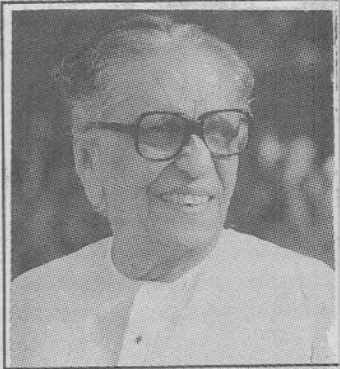
Then why this new venture of which some of our eminent gurus and senior dancers are promoters? The answer is simple. It is to preserve and promote what has come to be termed as the Mysore style of Bharathanatya. Which presupposes a separate entity to dance in this part of the country, though it bears the same nomenclature as that in Tamilnadu. And it is this contentious issue that is intriguing. True, ever since sage Bharata came out with his monumental treatise on dramaturgy, based on the tenets enunciated in it several dance styles have taken shape, each imbibing its own regional influence to emerge as distinct styles like Manipuri, Kathak, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohini Attam and last but not the least Bharathanatya, the last as applicable to the contiguous states of Karnataka and Tamilnadu.

For all practical purposes the style prevalent in the two states is very much the same. The principles governing Angika, Aaharya and Satwika are identical. If there is a perceptible variation, it is only in the aspect of Vachika. In conformity with regional influences, the repertoire in Tamilnadu draws more on the lyrics in Tamil, but certainly not to the exclusion of other languages. "Krishna Nee Begane" itself is an eloquent testimony, the famous Padam popularised by none other than the doyanne Balasaraswati herself. Contrarily, there are very few lyrics in Kannada, especially the all-important Varnam, a factor which has dawned on some of our dancers suddenly, prompting them to make concerted efforts to produce some overnight. They have yet to yield results though. But it is true that dancers locally for long have depended mainly on lyrics in Telugu and Sanskrit, zealously excluding those in Tamil, though the attitude of late has become liberal.

What is intriguing to a discerning mind, however, is why this alienation in the field of fine arts. No doubt, as in most other parts of the country, Karnataka also had a dance form of its own. But few can vouch for its distinct character. It took a definite shape and form only after an inter-action with the Nattuvanars of the neighbouring State of Tamilnadu, which again nurtured its style with the influence of Bhagavata Mela. But so far as the other aspects, the differences are imperceptible. They are as negligible as it is between what has come to be referred to as the Pandanallur, Tanjore, Vazhuvoor, Kanjeevaram or the Kalakshetra variations. Overall, in all of them as it is in Mysore (Karnataka), there are more similarities than differences. Mainly, if Nritya is a wee bit weak in the Mysore variation, its Abhinaya is certainly more profound and ebullient.

The need of the hour is to see that there is greater coordination between dancers espousing the so-called different variations so as to assimilate the best in each so as to arrive at a plausible style that accounts for excellence. It should be the duty of all lovers of dance and dance organisations to work towards such an integration and that could be a more enduring contribution to the art than to stay isolated.

S.N.Chandrasekhar



CALLING AIR

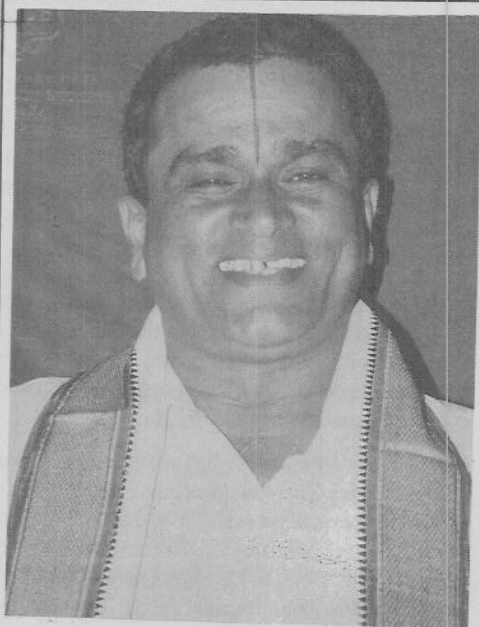
The interesting interview over the AIR of the popular ghatam artiste Sukanya Ramgopal (July 9) had something for musicians in general and those of her ilk in particular to gloat about.

As is well-known, these artistes and their sponsors alike have a grouse that audiences generally treat the percussion artistes with scant respect. The resentment justly is that listeners start moving out when the time comes for 'Thani Avarthanam'. The slot is invariably treated like an interval by many.

But Sukanya's experience is quite the contrary. That is so far as the audience in Canada and America go. In fact, that was the focus of the interview-audience behaviour. It speaks volumes for their aesthetic sensibilities that irrespective of their understanding capacity of the finer points of the art, they would sit through a concert.

And the concerts Sukanya was referring to were by our own M.S. Sheela. In her recent tour of the new world, Sukanya was in the company of Anoor Ananthadkrishna Sharma on the mridangam and Nalina Mohan on the violin. The foursome returned early in July.

As recounted in her interview, the concerts generally lasted for over four hours and the 'thani' every time generated as much appreciation as the vocal and violin turns. Obviously, the uncommon 'earthen pot' must have aroused the curiosity of listeners, especially the westerners. That does not mean un-



M.T. Shanmuganarayana

derestimating the calibre of the two percussionists. That is indisputable. But it certainly means that they had the sense of proportion and took care to see that they didn't try the patience

of the audience as it often happens back home!

On the concert side, the spacious alap for Athana (Ilalo Pranatarthi) by Nagamani Srinath (May 10, 8-30 am) unfolded the same panacea that has been associated with her chaste style. If the alap was re-posed, the krithi gracefully anchored to the structure to evoke some enduring 'sangatis'. The Dasarapada, Neenupekshema (Udayaravichandrika) stood out for its lyrical sweetness.

Ease and clarity marked the concert of S. Shankar (May 13, 10-10 am). The opening Sidhivinayakam (Shanmukhapriya) itself revealed a soft, well-preserved voice. His alap for Bilahari (Paridana) and Kharaharapriya (Chittaratnamaya) were attractive with some lilting 'sancharas', the lucidly articulated 'sahitya' charmingly enhancing the 'raga bhava'. It was a re-assuring recital.

V.K. Raman's flute recital (May 15, 9-30 pm) was as absorbing. With steady blowing and unhurried tempo, Raman brought out a sprightly portrayal of some haunting melodies like Dwijavanti (Chetashri), and Goula (Sri Mahaganapatim). Ranjini (Durmargachara) received a leisurely airing, the charming way he invested the familiar kriti with glowing 'swaraprasthara' being an eloquent testimony to his competence. Shankarabharana (swaragasudha) was treated as daintily, melodising the salient



Sukanya Ramgopal

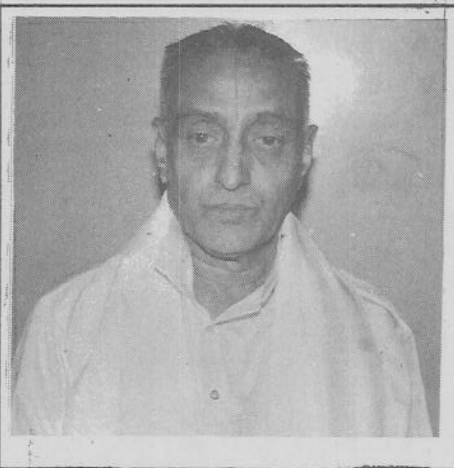
'sancharas' convincingly. The 'nirval' and 'swars' passages enhanced its aural overtones.

What a refreshing change was discernible in M.T. Shelvanarayana's recital on May 25! It was so different from the unfavourable impression he had made in his 'national' sometime ago. His Saveri (Shankaru Shankari) was replete with alluring 'sangatis', the fullness of 'sruti' testifying to his evocative style. One hopes he would keep up his application.

The unhurried grace in Sri Jalandhara (Gambhira-Nata) gave Suma Sudheendra's veena recital (May 25, 9-25 am) a lively start. Her alap for Charukeshi was as satisfying, the stress on the 'jiva swaras' giving it a distinct character. But the kriti was not as edifying, some unsavoury notes straying into the contour.

The South-Zone hook-up of Murali Krishna (May 27, 10 pm) was more disheartening. No doubt, Sri Saraswati (Arabhi) gave the youngster a flying start. But neither the Hamsanandi piece nor the stately Pakkalanilapadi (Kharaharapriya) could subscribe to a standard. The alap in either case, was sketchy, though the delineation of the kritis cannot be faulted. That was the saving grace.

One of the young violinists who has of late made a mark both as a soloist and accompanist is B.U. Ganesh Prasad. His Kalyani (May 28, 8-30 am) was notable for its soft bowing technique and steady fingering. The sketch of the raga was attractive, the kriti Birana standing out for its modal authenticity. Usha Kesari whose vocal followed at 9-30 am same day has a sweet voice, but needs a little more cultivation if it has to be honed to resonance. The Saranga piece Neevada gave her a fine start. But Saramati failed to live upto expectation, the lingering quality of the raga not fully coming alive.



V. Desikachar

V. Kalavathi who sang the next morning has already made a name for her consistency. But her Kirvani (Varamula) certainly could not do justice to it. The alap itself betrayed a feeble structure, the 'sancharas' straying away from the contour more than once. The rendition of kriti also left much to be desired, though her 'swara' forays were delectable. On the same day 9-30 am it was V.R. Vijayalakshmi who was on the AIR. She has a pleasant voice, but it sounds unhone to 'sruti'. What sustained the interest



Nagamani Srinath

was the unsullied imagery of Saranga, not a frequently heard raga.

B.S. Vijayaraghavan is a seasoned vocalist. But as he intoned Dhanyasi (June 2, 8-30 am), his voice seemed to tire out, a jaded feeling standing out in the presentation. But the two Kannada lyrics Echarikecharike in Hamsanandi and Tanu Ninnadu in Kedaragoula had all the endearments of 'raga bhava', without interfering in their lyrical interpretation. But Ambuja Narayan (June 3, 9-30 am) as she delineated Kirvani (Pranamami Sri) gave the impression of being in different to form. A florid 'bani' is discernible, but the interpretation lacks credibility.

D.N. Guru Dutt, same time next day, was no better. His alap for Bilahari (Sri Balasubramanyam) was passable. But in the rendition of the kriti, the 'swarasthara' went haywire. The singing was below par. But Rajalakshmi's veena recital (Mysore June 7, 8-30 am) was made for pleasant listening. She was sure of her fingering, aligned to a perfect 'sruti'.

Whether it was the opening Sowrashttra piece or the more detailed airing of Kiravani (Varamula), the portrayal underscored the sublime elegance of Carnatic music.

The sensitivity of the alap for Shankarabharana by R.S. Ramakanth (June 7, 9-15 am) almost blossomed into an original force as he unfolded the kriti Bhakti Bhiksha. The enunciation itself was in keeping with the spirit of the composition. The short pieces in Hamir-Kalyani and Mohana revealed an aural arrangement that could easily prompt aesthetic joy. But the South Zone hook-up by B.A. Narayana, a student of Nedanuri Krishnamurthy (June 6) could not rise above the pales of mediocrity. He has a facile voice, but he gives the impression of be-

ing in a hurry as evidenced in the Nata varnam and Abishta Varada (Hamsadhwani). His alap for Kalyana - Vasantha was more reposeful, the kriti Nadaloludai itself gaining in-depth due to a flurry of improvised 'swara' passages.

It was Kirvani again, but this time on the flute. The artiste was the seasoned S.A. Sashidhar (June 10, 8-30 am). The alap itself was neat and unhurried, the sure bowing technique making a pleasant impact. The structural development in the kriti, the style of phrasing and the use of meaningful 'gamakas' heightened the melodic grace in the playing. But Ratna Shivashankar who followed (9-30 am) sounded utterly out of form. Though the form in Mayamalavagoula (Viduluke) was unmistakable, her frequent slips in 'sruti' robbed the very mood in the rendition.

Nor could the veena recital of A.S.Padma speak for a standard above the routine. True, her Bhairavi (Sri Raghuvara) was tuneful, but lacked the pep to make it exciting. Her Shuddha Dhanyasi piece, however, revelled with some enduring 'sangatis'. Padma Narayanan's vocal (9-30 am) could not make a better impact. Her Begada (Abhimanamu) had a leisurely pace and Jayantasena (Vinatasuta) sounded authentic. But she was not sure of 'sruti'. That proved to be the villain of the piece!

The veena recital of T. Sharada (June 12, 8-30 am) was a treat. The concert started warming up with the almost forgotten Dhanyasi piece Shyamasundaranga. The sketch of the raga Ramapriya (Pari Pahimam) was more attractive, some alluring 'saucharas' enhancing its melodic overtones. A satisfying recital indeed. The violin solo by A. Veerabhadriah was as soulful, though not as steady. The alap for Pantuvarali was tidy, though not



A. Veerabhadriah

fully impactful. The delineation of the celebrated kriti Raghuvara bristled with some lilting layakari.

V. Desikachar's flute solo (9-30 pm, that night) had an old world charm



M.S. Vidya

about it. The Goula piece Pranamamyaham was followed by a trite composition in Ritigoula, characteristic in its structural elan. But it was Thodi that really lifted the aesthetic feel of the recital. The alap was subdued, but invested with the endearments associated with that time-tested melody. Emi Chesite, the familiar Thyagaiah kriti stood out for its tranquil mood. M. Nagaraj's inspiring violin support heightened the evocative overtones in the concert. Rajalakshmi Ramarao's vocal (June 14, 8-30) was just above the pedestrian level, though her voice has a lilt. Evarikai (Devamanohari) was disposed of without much hassles. But the alap for Kirvani betrayed slips in 'sruti'. The kriti Kaligiunte was also not free from lapses in 'sruti', the overall effect falling short of resonance.

The South Zone hook-up on June 16 was no better in its fervour. Though the lilting Raja Raja (Niroшти) gave Radhika Bhasker's veena recital a sprightly start, her Shahana (Raghupate) was so abysmal in its modal fidelity that it left one wondering how she was able to make it to the prestigious slot. Even the unfailing Kadanakutuhala piece Raghuvamshasuda couldn't give a better account of her 'sadam'.

D. Balakrishna's veena recital (June 17, 8-30 am) was in refreshing contrast. The very rollicking gait in Kannulara (Dhanyasi) made all the difference. The fullness in the sruti and the self-assurance as he intoned Madhyamavati helped in bringing out a sprightly portrayal of the raga, the kriti Nadupai redolent with some lingering 'swara' forays. A recital worthy of the tradition he upholds. Shaila Subramanyam (9-30 am same morning) has a refined style, as evidenced in the alap for Arabhi (O Rajeevaksha). But her voice is

shaky right through, betraying lack of application.

The same raga (Arabhi) gave M. Ramesh (June 18 9-30 am) a pleasant start. Chalagalla, the kriti revealed a steady voice, though could do with a sense of modulation. His alap for *Harikambodi* (Dinamanivamsha) was tidy, the rendition of the kriti itself not short of feeling. But the gravity and quietude one looks for in a seasoned singer still seems elusive. Lalita Prasad's vocal (June 19, 9-30 am) was no better in this regard. Her *Purvikalyani* (Kashivishalakshi) was true to form, but her voice lacks modulation. Yet there is promise here for sure.

Saroja Natarajan's *Harikambodi* (June 20, 9-30) (Rama Nannu) was as flamboyant as ever, bristling with lightning 'swara' passages. But in an effort to show the range in her voice, she tends to strain in the upper reaches often sounding squeaky. Her pieces in *Chakravaka* and *Bhoul* were impactful for their felicity of expression.

The alap for *Shankarabharana* by G.S. Kamala and G.S. Rajalakshmi (21, 8-30 am) was as authentic. Their facile voices combine well, their rendition attuned to the classical mode. The classic *Akshayalinga* was as dignified in its articulation, though the 'swaraprasthara' seemed unaccountably awry.

Sriranjini (Sogasuga) by Neela Ramanujam (June 22, 8-30 am) showed her in good fettle. A facile voice is her asset and she uses it well to explore the melodic reach of the raga. E.P.



G.S. Kamala and G.S. Rajalakshmi

Alamelu's veena recital (9-25, same day) was as evocative. If the *Hamsadhvani* piece showed a steady pace and clarity in the notes, her alap for *Shahana* was lucid in its elucidation, highlighting the *jiva swaras*, Rama Ikanannu received a leisurely airing, a sleek 'thanam' adjunct enhancing its sensitive touch.

T.S. Satyavati (June 24, 8-30 am) with the opening *Vandani* (*Hamsadhvani*) itself showed that she was out to settle scores with her compeers. It was noteworthy for the depth she has acquired to her style. Her alap for *Bilahari* was more edifying, projecting the 'ragabhava' convincingly. Sri Balasubramanyam was a study in rhythmic rhapsody, her improvisation in the 'swaraprasthara' giving an idea of the breadth of her vision. It was a

reassuring concert. M.K. Pranesh (June 26, 8-30 am) made as good an impression with a neat *Latangi* (*Marivere*). His subdued style has a sensitive appeal, especially the emphasis he lays on the 'sahitya'.

At 9-30 am it was M.S. Vidya who was on the air. She has a well-cultivated voice and she uses it intelligently to make her singing evocative. Her alap for *Malayamaruta* was neat and precise, the familiar kriti *Manasa Etulo* invested with a liberal array of 'sarvalaghu' swara forays. The *Kuranji* piece was as lovely in its lyrical appeal.

In her Hindustani vocal, Shanta Jayateertha (June 27, 8-30 am) chose a rare combination, *Huseni-Thodi* to regale the listeners. Shanta has an undoubtedly trained approach, chaste style at once casting an indelible impression. She has a melodious voice and sings methodically in keeping with the slow, measured feel of her personality!

It was the popular Sikkil Sisters, Neela and Kunjumani who were featured in the National Programme on June 29. Their flute duet is very popular, en-

dowed as they are with a sound grounding and a wide repertoire. *Nadupai*, the *Madhyamavati* piece gave them a fine start. *Neetimati* (*Srikanta*) was as competent in its aural edifice. The piece de resistance was *Mohana* which was treated for a raga-thana and pallavi. It was negotiated in a traditional manner providing a field day for the percussionists.



Neela and Kunjumani

ESSENCE



N.S. Krishna Murthy, retired Station Director, AIR releasing the souvenir at the 15th Talavadyothsasva 96. Others seated (from right) R. Vishweshwaran, A.R. Chandrahasa Gupta and M.A. Narasimhachar.

15th Talavadyothsava '96

N.Sundarraaj

The 15th Talavadyothsava '96, organised by the Percussive Arts Centre (PAC), Bangalore was inaugurated by A.R. Chandrahasa Gupta, IAS, Secretary, Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka on the evening of May 27, 1996, at Yavanika with the presentation of Palani Subramanya Pillai Award, with the title, Laya Kala Nipuna to veena maestro of Mysore, R. Visweshwaran. The award included a shawl, citation and cash of Rs 5000/-.

This award was donated by Sudha Rao and A.H. Rama Rao of Rama Sudha Charitable Trust.

N.S. Krishna Murthy, former sta-

tion director of AIR who released the souvenir commemorating the utsav, speaking on Subramanya Pillai, advised youngsters to follow the old timers. "Today it is monotony and too mechanical in music", he said and concluded by saying that all artistes have developed the habit of increasing the volume of the sound system forgetting the feelings of audience.

He praised Bangalore K Venkatram the kingpin of the festival for his yeoman service in the field of music and specially percussion and publication.

Vidwan M.A. Narasimhachar and mridanga vidwan T.A.S. Mani spoke on Visweshwaran. Earlier M. Surya Prasad welcomed the gathering and

introduced the dignitaries. Padma Gurudutt read the citation and V. Krishna presented a report on PAC. Ravi proposed a vote of thanks. The programme was conpered by Anasuya Kulkarni.

The inaugural function was followed by a veena concert by R. Visweshwaran accompanied by M.T. Rajakesari (mridanga) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghatam).

Laya Kala Nipuna

The H. Puttachar Memorial Award, donated by kanjira vidwan H.P. Ramachar and the title "Laya Kala Nipuna" was awarded to the mridanga vidwan M.T. Rajakesari on the evening of May 28, 96 by Nittoor



R. Visweshwaran receiving the award from A.R. Chandrasa Gupta, Secretary, Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka

Srinivasa Rau, President of the PAC. This award is awarded for the artistes between 40 and 60 years and carries a cash award of Rs 2500-00.

A book, Tala Vadya Seminar II was released by S. Krishna Murthy, former station director of AIR. In his address, Krishna Murthy recalled the days when maharajas honoured vidwans and now the government is honouring artistes. "Musicians honouring another musician is something great and commands greater value", he said. Speaking very highly about the contents of the book, Krishna Murthy said that "whatever Bangalore Venkatram, editor of the book, does, is done in style".

Vidwans A. Veerabhadriah and A.V. Anand spoke on M.T. Rajakesari. B.K. Chandramouli read out the citation.

This was followed by H.C.K. Bhatta Memorial programme, a musical feature, 'Laya in Sugama Sangeetha' presented by S.Bali and participated by C. Aswath, Y.K. Muddukrishna, Ratnamala Prakash, Malathi Sharma, Raju Ananthaswamy, D.Devambu, Kashyap, N.S. Prasad

and N.S.Muralidhar.

Symposium on Chembai

In the symposium on Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar Birth Centenary organised on May 29, Valayapatti S Malarvannan gave a Laya Vinyasa accompanied by

R.Yogaraj (mridangam) and Papanasam Sethuraman (kanjira).

N.Ramanathan, Head of the Department of Music, Madras University and B.M. Sundaram, noted musicalogist spoke on the personality and artistry of Chembai. V. Doreswamy Iyengar who chaired the session paid rich tributes to Chembai.

The day's programme concluded with the Laya Lahari, a percussion ensemble of Ayyanar College of Music, Bangalore with M.Venkatesh Achar in the lead.

At the symposium on Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Garland N. Rajagopalan, N. Ramanathan and B.M. Sundaram spoke on Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. Noted critic B.V.K. Sastry who had chaired the session narrated his acquaintance with the maestro. This was followed by the R.K. Srikantan Endowment programme, where Maharajapuram Srinivasan gave a vocal concert on the evening of May 30, 96 accompanied by M.S.Govindaswamy (violin), A.V. Anand (mridangam) and R.A. Rajagopaln (ghatam). This was sponsored by the Maharajapuram Trust.



Justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rao (left) presenting the award to M.T. Rajakesari.



Lalgudi G Jayaraman presenting the award to Guruvayur Dorai

Mridanga Kala Siromani

Curtains of the festival came down on the evening of May 31, 96 with the presentation of the K. Putturao Memorial Palghat Mani Award, donated by K.K. Murthy, President of Academy of Music to vidwan Guruvayur Dorai by the violin maestro Lalgudi G Jayaraman at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall. This included a shawl, citation and cash of Rs 5,000/-.

In his address, Lalgudi G Jayaraman remembered the old days and his experience with the stalwarts of yester years. He appreciated the mridangam playing of Dorai and said that if the concert is to be successful the mridangam should be competent. He praised K.K. Murthy and A.H. Rama Rao for their benevolence to the promotion of the art.

Earlier, Guruvayur Dorai who was given the purna kumbha swagatha by B.S. Shivaswamy, was received by K.K. Murthy at the entrance of the hall. U.D.N. Rao welcomed the invitees and dignitaries and A.H. Rama Rao read out a report on the festival.

The citation was read out by Kalavathi.

While giving his felicitous address, V. Doreswamy Iyengar praised K.K. Murthy for his generous gesture of donating the award to music artistes. The invocation was sung by V. Ramprasad, welcome address was given by U.D.N. Rao, the report was read out by A.H. Rama Rao and the programmed was compered by T.S. Sathyavathy.

Photo Exhibition

A unique photographic exhibition of 62 photographs of selected laya vidwans by N. Sundarraj, editor, Indian Photography and Cinema-tography and managing editor, Phoenix was arranged at the ground floor of Yavanika. The exhibition was open through the five-day festival. This was sponsored by PHOENIX.



Guruvayur Dorai

Guruvayur Dorai

Born on July 2, 35, Guruvayur Dorai learnt playing mridangam from eminent mridanga vidwans Palghat Subba Iyer and Palani Subramanya Pillai. His innate talent and dedicated hardwork gained him a unique and unimitable mastery over mridangam.

Dorai never compromises in quality and tradition and utilises every opportunity to his advantage and betterment. His artistry grew along with his experience.

He has accompanied all top musicians in the country and has evolved a pleasing technique of playing mridangam which pleases every one. During his 53 years of successful career Dorai has been featured in national programmes conducted by AIR and Doordarshan. There is no sahaba or a festival in the country where Dorai has not participated.

His visiting foreign countries is a routine. He is a visiting professor of a couple of Western Universities. He was appointed the Dean of Temple of Fine Arts, an international organisation for the promotion of music and dance in 1994.

Many titles have come his way. to



M.T. Rajakesari

name a few are: Nal Laya Mamani of Tamilnadu Nalvazhi Nilayam; Tal Vilas by Sangeeth Peeth, Sur Singar Samsad, Bombay and Kalaimamani by the Government of Tamilnadu. Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham made his its Asthana Vidwan in 1991.

M.T. Rajakesari

M.T. Rajakesari, the mridangam artiste of repute was trained under K. Gopala Rao at his early age. He had his advanced training under Karaikudi



R. Visweswaran

Mani of Madras.

Mild and soft spoken Rajakesari is on the staff of AIR Bangalore.

R. Visweswaran

R. Visweswaran hails from the family of musicians and Vaggeyakaras of Mysore. He started as a vocalist and later switched over to veena. He is one of the well-known Mysore Brothers.

He was guided by his brother R. Seetharam and believes that the veena play should be vocal based. He has carried out research on many aspects of veena. He has served as the professor in the Department of Performing Arts, University of Mysore. He has given innumerable authoritative lectures on many aspects of music and veena all over the country.

Visweswaran has submitted papers in many seminars on music and his articles have been featured in many prestigious publications.

He has extensively toured giving performances and has conducted workshops on music. His recent workshop in Bangalore drew good response.

Visweswaran is a composer too and can sing well ■

Know your Artistes

M.S. Vidya



M.S. Vidya, a vocalist of high calibre is the daughter of late M. Seshagiri Achar of the famous duo, Bellary brothers. She learnt Carnatic vocal music from her father and later from R.S. Ramamani. She was awarded the State scholarship during 1984 - 1986 and the National scholarship from 1991-1992.

Vidya passed senior grade examination in first class and obtained first rank in Vidwath grade examination in 1995. She is a B High grade artiste of AIR.

She has won the best vocalist prize in various competitions conducted by East Cultural Association, South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Bangalore Gayana Samaja and Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha.

Vidya's concert career started when she was 11 years. She has given concerts at Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha, Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, Bangalore and Mysore, Mylapore Fine Arts, Madras, D.K.J. Foundation, Madras and Hyderabad Vigyana Samithi. She is the main vocalist of Karnataka College of Percussion.

Her recent concert at Madras under aegis of Balaganamrutham and Karnataka College of Percussion at Narada Gana Sabha auditorium was well appreciated.

A.P. Rao

Inheritor of a Glorious Tradition

S.N.Chnadrasekhar

The author of the foregoing article is V. Doreswamy Iyengar. He is one of the foremost exponents of the veena, an instrument which has endowed a special status to Mysore, his home town, in the realm of music. Representing a tradition hallowed by such illustrious names as Venkatasubiah, Seshanna, Subbanna and Venkatagiriappa, he is today a most sought after personality at all music festivals, conferences and concerts all over the country both as a performer and for academic erudition. It is not uncommon at such venues to see musicians vying with one another

in exhibiting his concrete influence over their own music, just as young enthusiasts would be keenly longing to learn under him. He is verily the doyen of music in Karnataka, if not the country as a whole today.

A virtuoso of international repute, Dr Iyengar is a refined artiste with wide-ranging interpretative powers. His speciality is the purity of style, not enamoured by the pervading influence of the contact mike. He sticks to the original form, wielding it with immaculate felicity distinction.

Dr Iyengar is the inheritor of a glorious tradition of playing the veena, characterised by a soft 'meetu'. Like his illustrious predecessors tracing back to the legendary Veena Seshanna, his music is charmingly accented and stylistically sensitive, embellishing his melodies with artistic patterning and decorative discernment, imbuing every note with the spirit of the raga and every phrase with its unique colour.

Doreswamy was introduced into the realm of music almost at the same time as he started his schooling, by his father Venkatesha Iyengar, himself an

MYSORE BANI IN VEENA

Dr V.Doreswami Iyengar

We often come across the word 'BANI', used with reference to various styles of music, vocal and instrumental. In Hindusthani music, the term used is 'Gharana'. Though Carnatic music is common to the whole of South India, there are as many variations and techniques as there are linguistic regions. A seasoned listener can approximately guess the school of music to which the artiste belongs. Each region has developed its own technique, style and native characteristics that are typical and have their own charm. These are the main points that collectively form a 'BANI'.

Differences in Banis are more pro-

nounced in veena, there being three major Banis, viz., Thanjavur, Andhra and Mysore. Great vainikas in each Bani have nurtured and enriched the tradition in their own way. It is a difficult task to convey in writing the distinct aspects of a 'Bani'. It should be heard and experienced. But an attempt is made here to acquaint the readers with the 'Mysore Bani in veena' by explaining its special technique and method of rendering Ragam and Tanam.

Right Hand Technique

The quality of 'Meetu' (plucking of the strings) is given importance. It should be firm, steady and soft. The

strings should be plucked with the index and middle fingers alternately. This ensures a continuous flow of sound. There are special exercises and Swarajatis, specially composed for veena which help a player acquire skill in the art of plucking. Vainikas in the past practiced Swarajatis like the one in Mohanam, composed by Vijayanagaram Gururajacharya, which gave the right hand fingers a special practice. The plucking is done with the natural nails on the fingers and not with plectrum

Left Hand Technique

Much importance is given to the left hand technique also. One would do well to practice compositions

accomplished vainika. But his reinforcement started when he was brought under the tutelage of Vainika Praveena Venkatagiriappa, a renowned Palace vidwan in the early part of this century. It was an ideal 'Guru'Sishya' relationship, the latter's vision of an artistic flight soaring under a disciplinarian who saw the fulfilment of many a musical fancy of his own in his disciple. Assiduous practice combined with such intellectual process trans-

formed the youngster into a mature musician, paving the way for recognition as an 'Asthana Vidwan' by the Mysore palace, the alter of fine arts at the time. Which in reality did not mean a 'kushi job'. On the other hand, it instilled certain tensions, pulls and buoyancy, collectively leading him to arrive at a style that symbolised his softy vision and personality.

During all these strenuous exercises, Doreswamy had not neglected his academic studies, eventually se-

curing a degree from the Mysore University. But it was his achievements in music that carved a career for him.



Dr V. Doreswamy Iyengar and wife S. Haradamma.

bringing laurels from all corners of the globe, including the signal honour of being conferred an honorary doctorate by the same University which had made him a graduate!

That is not all. He is the recipient of almost every honour that an artiste can conceive of including the exalted Padma Bushan of the Union Government and the coveted Sangeeta Kalanidhi of the Madras Music Academy. Prestigious institutions like the Central and State music academies,

the Bangalore Gayana Samaja and the Karnataka Government itself have vied with one another to bestow their honours on him. His long tenure as Producer of Music with the AIR, Bangalore, was studied with as many memorable concerts by himself as the prize-winning features he has produced. His concerts in prestigious festivals abroad have won for him and the land of his birth plaudits from eminent personalities in the field of culture.

With all these awe-inspiring achievements,

Doreswamy Iyengar has remained the same - a dedicated exponent of music, as assiduous in his daily practice as he was as an aspirant. Nor has there been a change in his personality - a personification of grace and humility. He is as easily accessible to persons in authority as to the lowly. He is an eternal friend, philosopher and guide to the artistes, encouraging them with sound advice when they approach him. Indeed, he is an epitome of Karnataka culture! ■

specially composed for veena which will train the fingers to produce all the 'Dasavidha Gamakas' referred to in musical treatises, besides helping them to negotiate many a difficult musical passage with speed and ease. Each "gamaka" is produced by using the correct techniques like Jaru, Leena, Vali, (inflection of the strings on a single fret), 'spurita' 'pratyahata' etc., in the right context. The technique of using the left hand index and middle fingers, holding them apart, is another unique feature of the Mysore Bani.

This technique helps the player to negotiate a musical passage like

p m m g g r r s s n n d d p p m g g r in ragas like 'Bilahari' or 'Kharahara-priya'. The whole movement from Tara to Mandhra sthayi is done in a single stroke and in a fast speed. The sound is kept alive by skillful use of the left hand middle finger. This technique can only be acquired by hard practice. The side strings of a veena are used only to indicate 'Laghus' and 'Dhrutas' of a Tala cycle and never used unnecessarily to disturb the main sound. There should be a balanced use of the different techniques, each one in the right context

TANAS

The style of rendering Tanas has its own grandeur and special techniques. Tanas move in a medium and steady speed in combinations of 3, 5, or 7 swaras. The sound of the side-strings is interspersed in between the notes. The right hand and left-hand fingers must be used in a disciplined manner.

It is a highly evolved technique. To master it, Vainikas of the older generation used to practice hundreds of 'chitta tanas' (composed Tanas) in Ghana ragas like Nata, Gowla, ■



Dr Iyengar when he took over as AIR music producer

Arabhi, Varali, Sri, Kedara, Reetigowla, Narayana Gowla etc., Occasional interspersions of phrases in the higher speeds make the Tanas very lively. There are different varieties of Tanas like Gaja Tana, Mandooka Tana, Ashwa Tana, Shanukha Tana, etc., which remind one of the movements of the respective animals. While playing Chakra Tana the left hand fingers move on all the strings in a circular manner.

The Mysore Bani on the whole

of an earlier era felt that the potentialities of the instrument should be fully exploited by a judicious combination of the vocal and veena techniques in order to make a veena recital more sustaining and satisfactory. Seshanna made full use of the techniques mentioned in the Lakshana Granthas and added a few new ones too.

Veena Bakshi Subbanna, Seshanna's contemporary, adopted the vocal style as he was a disciple of Mysore Sadasiva Rao. Seshanna, be-

has a direct appeal and sustaining quality. It has been in vogue for the last 175 years since the days of Veena Venkatasubbiah, who was an Asthana vidwan in the court of Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. (19th century). It reached the acme of perfection in the hands of Vainika Sikhamani Seshanna of hallowed memory, who was the most celebrated amongst the vainikas of Mysore and enhanced the reputation of Mysore as a Veena centre. He believed that the scope of the veena would be constricted if confined purely to the vocal style. He and the other vainikas

ing endowed with a rich imagination, devoted a considerable portion of a concert to the creative aspects like Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi. His 'meettus' were so mature that one felt he was plucking the strings with a feather. He had a gift for 'Daatu-swara prayogas' like 'g-p-s-g, n-r-p-a, p-n-r-p, g-p-n-p' (Hamsadhwani) and used them without marring the beauty of the Raga.

Ragas like Todi, Kalyani, Jhunjooti and Khamas, when played by him had a flavour of their own, a Mysore flavour if one may call it. A sample of this flavour could be tested in his famous tillana in Junjooti.

The Mysore Bani in veena existed in its purest form till about 45 years ago. Vainikas like my Guru Vainika Praveena Venkatagiriappa, Bhairavi Lakshminaranappa and Veena Shivaramaiah zealously guarded this style, in character and form. After their time, the Mysore Bani came under different influences as a result of which it lost its exclusive characteristics. The present Mysore Bani is more vocal oriented. In spite of these changes, traces of the old Mysore technique are noticeable to a large extent in some old timers still surviving.

In today's context, it is better for each Bani to take some salient points from the other and be the richer for it. ■

Master of the Strings

S. Ramachandran MA

It has been authoritatively stated that, as expressing human emotions, there is no other aspect of art or philosophy, which can excel music. The human emotions have yet to be defined clearly, except under certain divergences. Music has its own language, the language of the heart and its appeal is universal. Expression of one's

thoughts or feelings through music can never mislead, contrary to spoken words. We are also aware that the culture of a nation is best described in music and allied fine arts. Every occurrence in the world of phenomena leads us in the ultimate analysis to vibrations. It is only a very limited range of these vibrations in a limited

number of media that are cognisable by our outer senses. A certain gamut gives the experience of sound, another light and so on. In the case of music, the vibrations, set up in air, affecting certain regions in our auditory organ, convey certain impression to the cerebral area, which, in turn, relate them to other aspects in our nature on the principle of correspondence converting them into reflections in mind, emotion, intuition etc.

Through the medium of sound reaching our physical tympanum, our emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects are affected. True music, however, goes far deeper to our very soul

and leaves an indelible imprint. It may not be possible to explain and describe this reaction in ordinary language; it can only be felt. This is one of those great mystic experience which baffle analytical expression. An artiste can reveal his innermost soul in his music, forget himself in it, and experiences great peace and calm; at such moments he feels something pouring into and permeating him and he senses the bliss of creative art activity. This is the true artiste.

The world of Carnatic music has been graced by towering personalities, in all branches of the art, who had imbibed all that was divine and essential and thrilled the listeners over a span of many years.

They in turn, had handed down this rich legacy to a newer generation and this inheritance has continued to this day. Thus the great art has been preserved and will continue to be cherished eternally.

In the realm of Carnatic music, we have a number of artistes, some of them in the top rank, who sing well and play well. But do we have many creative artistes in the true sense of the term? One of the striking features of our music is that, while it is apparently governed by rules and regulations, it is at the same time so elastic, so full of possibilities of improvisation and so remarkably capable of *manodharma*. While giving due consideration to tradition stemming from the past, Carnatic music is free and improved upon so that all powers of imagination in the artiste - but strictly within the framework as laid down by the past masters - are brought into play.

Padma Bhushana Sangitha Kalanidhi Dr Venkatesa Iyengar Doreswamy Iyengar fills the picture to a very great extent. Like shining stars in the clouded sky he is one of the few *vainikas* with us who elevate classical music from the general gloom that appears to have settled on it. He presents great compositions in the style they ought to be whenever he performs. He has the

heart for the music he plays, choosing the fare with extreme care and presenting it with a knowledge of beautiful interpretation that sets maximum store by responsible use of the strings, a habit that has constantly deepened its functioning and freshened its appeal. The excellence of his *pata* and the strength of his style in which he maintains repose and delicate beauty have won for him the hearts of thousands of his listeners.

Born in a musical family, his father Venkatesha Iyengar was both a *vainika* and flutist, and was a member of the palace's orchestra, young Doreswamy Iyengar learned the rudiments from his father. The leader of the orchestral group and also the *asthana vidwan* of Mysore court, Venkatagiriappa happened to hear the youngster practising one day and decided to take him under his wing. Thus began a career that was to continue for more than ten years, by which time, Doreswamy Iyengar had become an artiste of renown. Venkatagiriappa taught him the notations of Western music also, and the *sisya* used to help his guru to write down *krithis* in western notations, along with their harmonising accompaniments! Iyengar also attended *mridangam* classes to acquire greater repertoire in his *swaraprastharas*. When his *sisya* passed out of the college at Mysore, guru Venkatagiriappa arranged for his appointment as *Asthana Vidwan* at Mysore Court. Venkatagiriappa was a most kind hearted man who gave so generally of all his vast learning to his pupil. He would have been gratified to see his favourite student rise to the position of *veena's* foremost master of today.

Doreswamy Iyengar is perhaps one of the very few *vainikas* who are imbibed with a steadfast loyalty and zealous faith in "*Sampradhaaya*". His delicate sense of melodic values has never been corrupted by the many changes in trends. There is no acrobaticism or gimmickry which could border on vandalism. There are no

pyrotechnics, no bald parody, no drolling boom, no clap-trap. One can go on and on. His music stems from absolute dedication and industry and finds its proper level. His artistry in enriching the melody without violence has always been a matter of filigreed beauty. To those who long to listen to reposeful and sublime music, a concert by Doreswamy Iyengar would more than quench their thirst.

A man of simple habits and conventional decorum, Doreswamy Iyengar is perhaps the only *vainika* who does not use a contact mike. He has his own reasons for it, as he explains: "Fundamentally the *veena* is a melodic instrument. Its sound or *naadham* is to be presented in as close to its true tone as possible. I know that contact mike has come to stay, but it has also come to kill all the fine, delicate, subtle, almost spiritual nuances of our music which is intended to be rendered without any distortion through a mechanical or an electronic gadget. Arguments may be made in favour of the mike, but it is a fact that it takes away the charm, delicacy, fineness, and the finish so characteristic of our music".

Doreswamy Iyengar has held the post of the Programme Director of AIR, Bangalore, and is a member of the Experts' Committee of the Music Academy, Madras. He also headed the Karnataka State Sangitha Nrithya Academy for three years. He has performed at all the centres in the country, and visited abroad where his fingers have enchanted the listening public. One memorable occasion that cannot be easily forgotten - a few years ago in Madras - when the redoubtable Palghat Mani Aiyar requested Doreswamy Iyengar to play on his *veena* and demonstrate the art of "*tanam-playing*", and he himself (Mani Aiyar) accompanied him on the *Mridangam*. The two instruments so enhanced each other's melody in the smooth flow of rhythmic patterns, that the audience was almost mesmerized.

ARAN



Photos

The Bharatanatyam arangetram of Smitha Iyengar, daughter of G.K. Sridhar and Jyothi Sridhar was conducted on August 3, 96 at the Ravindra Kalakshetra, Bangalore.

Smitha's maiden programme consisted of items which were notable for their melodious and rhythmic aspects.

The excellent orchestral support was provided by U.K. Arun and Savitha Arun (nattuvangam), Jahnavi Jayaprakash (vocal), Gurumurthy (mridangam), Hemant Kumar (violin), K.C. Aswathanarayan (flute) and Balakrishna (morching).

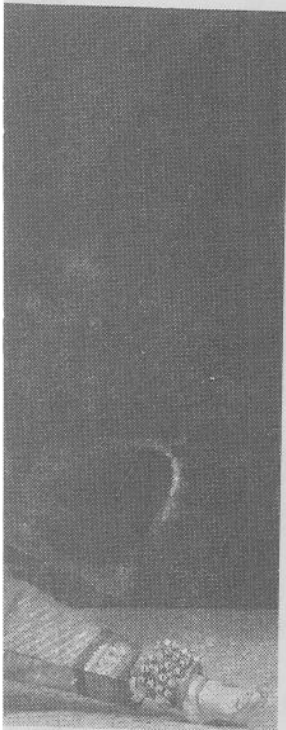
Smitha is the grand daughter of late G. Krishna Iyengar, founder of well known "Iyengar and Sons", popularly known as "The only Tyre Clinic", set on a journey to Bharatanatyam at an early age of nine. She came under the guidance of vidwan U.K. Arun and Savitha Arun of Nritya Vidya Niketan, Bangalore.



TRAM



arraj



She completed the State Junior Examination with distinction performing well in the Senior Grade, confident of repeating the feat.

Smitha is a keen exponent of Carnatic music, trained by N.S. Raman of Bangalore. She has given recitals along with her sister Preethi Iyengar, to win recognition as Javagal Sisters. Their performance at the Sri Ramaseva Mandali, Chamarajapet, Bangalore, known as the citadel of music, was acclaimed as above average. Her interest in Western music is as absorbing.

Smitha is as keen academically to graduate in Commerce and to secure a Master Degree in Business Administration. She has been a disciplined student with cultured manners. She is acclaimed as a favourite amongst friends and relatives.

AIR Turns Visual



B.K.S. Verma drawing with a thread dipped in ink

Outside broadcast is not a new concept for Akashavani. Important events are marked with a concert or feature to an invited audience, broadcast live or recorded for subsequent use.

Chitra Kavya, the Bangalore

AIR's latest venture was in a similar vein, though with a wider appeal. Blending poetry, music, song and the visual art of painting was a worthwhile proposition. For some unknown reason dance, alas, was kept out of its purview ! But it was a successful experiment, the overwhelming re-

sponse of the audience at Yavanika recently vouching for it.

The approach is to blend the different forms of artistic expression. The reaction is in a chain, its "Srushti" part starting with the recitation of the verse, the composer embellishing it with a tune, the singer vocalising it in music and the painter interpreting the idea on his canvas.

The process is reversed in "Prati Srushti", Here the poet is asked to view a canvas and give vent to his impression lyrically and the composer and singer interact with him jointly to render it in a song.

The programme generated as much enthusiasm among the participants as the curiosity of the audience. It was interesting to watch artists B.K.S. Verma and M.B. Patil interpreting popular lines of D.R. Bendre, 'Vinayaka' and G.S. Shivarudappa meaningfully. If the alacrity in which Verma manipulated a thread dipped in ink to arrive at his linear compositions was incredible, the deft handling of water-colors by Patil to produce colour fantasies was as fascinating.

One such painting evoked a poem in H.S. Venkatesha Murthy, bringing metaphors bordering on metaphysics. The eight-line lyric was enlivened in



L to R G.V. Atri, M. Nagendra, V. Jayashree and Premalatha singing at the Chitra Kavya organised by the AIR

the soulful refrain of Shanta Jayateertha in 'ghazal' style.

Likewise M.N. Vyasa Rao touched popular sentiments when he drew inspiration from another canvas, pleading for ecological balance. Dodda Rangegowda echoed a similar fear about the dwindling green cover, sore that mankind should have forgotten its roots of evolution. P.S. Vasantha and G.V. Atri rendered these lyrics with

due accent on the sentiments.

Indeed, the AIR which is essentially an audio medium had exploited the potential of the visual medium admirably. It is for the first time in the city that a cultural organisation attempted to blend diverse artistic expressions into a cohesive aesthetic entertainment, a synthesis which holds immense possibilities.

KAY JEE

Bhoop or Deskar

Prof.N.Krishnaswamy

It is a film song "*Jyoti Kalash Chamakey*". What raga is this? It is always interesting to try and trace the raga in a film song. I can see the scale is Sa Ri Ga Pa Dha Sa and Sa Dha Pa Ga Ri Sa.

But it does not sound like Bhoop, as does, say "*Sayonara, Sayonara*". I have not heard many Japanese songs. But the few I have seem to be based on a pentatonic scale like Bhoop. The melody is simple. Modern film music is not like that.

The film songs of the early days of Indian cinema, from New Theatres, Prabhat and Bombay Talkies work straight forward. When K.L. Saigal sang "*Balamaye baso more man mey*", it was typical Kafi and when he sang "*Babul mora maihar choot hi joy*" it was an unmistakable Bhairavi, in fact it is a Thumri composed by the unfortunate Nawab of Awadh - Mohammed Shah Rangiley.

I have heard Bhimsen Joshi sing this Thumri in an unforgettable Bhairavi. So most of the songs of Saigal were straight classical music. If you master all songs of Saigal you get a good introduction to the ragas of Hindustani music. I got my introduction to classical music through Saigal.

But what raga is this "*Jyoti Kalash*"? I thought it was Bhoop till

Baby comes from Nagpur and tells me is in Deskar. Deskar has always intrigued me. It sounds like Bhoop. But it is not cent percent Bhoop. She tells me it is because the vadi of Bhoop is Ga and the vadi of Deskar is Dha it is not like Karnatak music, where Mohana is always mohana, no mistake.

I have read some where, some one doing an analysis of this vadi - samvadi. He has found, in practice, that many great musicians do not use the vadi more than the other swaras while singing. And this samvadi, where does that come? The analysis could find any clue for that, in actual practice.

I tell all this to Baby. I tell her all this vadi-samvadi is meaningless. It is only a trick to fool the lay man - the professional musician trying to make a "ga-dha" of the poor layman. Baby says "you may talk like that. But if I write like that in my theory paper, I will get a zero."

She is studying music. She says Bhoop-Deskar are just like Bhairavi and Kalingada. Now, What is the difference between these two ragas? I do not see any difference between them, either! when a Bhairavi starts being odd, I suspect that it might be Kalingada. Kalingada is Bhairavi in disguise!■

Extraordinary Talent



The world of music has come across quite a few young ones of extraordinary talent. Even before they were five years of age, Ravikiran (chitraveena artiste) and his cousin Ganesh could identify any Raga in a jiffy. That was a phenomenon as neither had any idea of 'swaras'. As ignorant they were of the "three Rs".

A more striking phenomenon has come to light in Baby M.N. Ratnakanchi whose genius revealed itself when she was hardly four. Though she had not been initiated into music, she was at that tender age identifying the 'swaras' in all types of music-vocal or instrumental.

As her mother Neela Ramanujam, herself a competent vocalist, explains as a child of four Ratna delighted in reproducing tunes emanating over the TV or radio instantly. What is more, she could as casually render the tune in 'swaras'.

This genius in her has won recognition from several quarters. The AIR has featured her in "Chilimili" and the TV in its children's programme. The Sangeeta Rasika Samkhya, Tirupati has given a certificate about her 'fine demonstration' under its auspices.

Now six, Ratna is studying in the III standard in the Cluny Convent and is reported to be good in studies too. Growing in an atmosphere surcharged with music, there is every hope that Ratna will blossom into as good a musician as her mother.

From Here & There

Bombay Beat

Concert Stage

Anuradha Krishnamurthi, gave a vocal recital at the Little Theatre on June 10, 96. She was accompanied by Kalpana Kishore (violin) and Arun Prakash (mridangam).

A concert by Gulam Hussain, in memory of Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan was organised at the Dadar Matunga Cultural Centre Hall on June 16, 96. Rajendra Antarkar supported his on tabala and Rajabhau Patwardhan on harmonium.

A jugalbandi by Neela Bhagwat and Aruna Sayeeram was presented at the Tilak Mandir, Vile Parle East under the aegis of Vile Parle Music Circle.

Nagamani Srinath of Mysore gave a Carnatic vocal recital on June 24, 96 at the Little Theatre.

Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha

Forthcoming Programmes

Aug 10: Nagaswaram by Mambalam M.K.S. Siva and Mambalam M.K.S. Natarajan accompaniments: Tirupungur T.G. Muthukumaraswamy and Mambalam M.K.S. Shanmugam (thavil).

Aug 25: Mandolin by A.P. Raju and party

Sep 14: Vocal recital by T.M. Krishna, Kalpana Kishore (violin) and Kallidai-kurchi Sivakumar (mridangam).

Sep 16: Vocal recital by Swati Shastri. M.S.N. Murthy (violin) and Sriram Subramanyam (mridangam).

Oct 19: Vocal by Vijayalakshmi Subramanyam, M.Narmada (violin)

and J.Vaidyanathan (mridangam).

Oct 20: Vocal V. Shankaranara-yanan. R.Hemalatha (violin), Tiruvidaimarudur S. Shankaran (mridangam) and K.S. Rangachari (kanjira).

Oct 21: Flute recital by L.V. Mukund of Bangalore.

Geetha Raja

Ongole Festival

A two day festival of music in memory of Gayaka Chakravarthi Denurikonda Subbarao Panthulu was held on April 20 and 21 at the Gayathri Devi Kalyana Mandapam, Ongole.

Bommaraju Gopalakrishna Murthy sang the krithis of Subbarao Panthulu accompanied by Kooravadi Yelamandaraju (violin) and Mugilicherla Sriramulu (mridangam). This was followed by another vocal concert by Kuravi Lalitha accompanied by Palaparthi Nageswara Rao (violin) and K.Sadguru Charan (mridangam).

April 21 saw the group singing by the students of Sri Vani Kalaniketan supported by Yelamandaraju (violin) and Sriramulu (mridangam).

Mridangam artiste Dandamudi Rammohan Rao of Vijayawada was honoured for his services to Carnatic music.

Later Nellabotla Ranganayaka Sharma concluded the festival with his vocal concert supported by P. Nageshwara Rao (violin), K. Sadguru Charan (mridangam) and Bhuparapalli Venkateswaralu (ghatam).

A Carnatic music competition for juniors and seniors was held during the festival.

C.Narasa Raju, Chirala

Bangalore Beat

Cassette Released

Audio Cassette, by M.A. Meera and M.A. Mythili was released at Sri Vadiraja Sabha Bhavana, Bangalore by Veena Vidwan V. Doreswamy Iyengar. S.K. Ramachandra Rao spoke on the compositions

The sabha founded by M.A. Narasimhachar celebrated its 54th anniversary.

Gejje Naada

A three day festival of dance, 'Gejje Naada' was held at the Ravindra Kalakshetra, Bangalore under Shambhavi Nrithya Shaale.

Compositions on Ganesha

Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat, Bangalore organised special training camps of compositions on Ganesha by various composers at Ananya, Malleswaram and Srirama Mandira, Basavanagudi on July 11 and 13 respectively.

Madras Beat Annamacharya Day

588th Jayanthi Celebrations of Tallapakka Annamacharya was celebrated at the Music Academy, Madras, on July 20, 96.

Songs of Annamacharya were sung by the group led by G.Balakrishna Prasad, B.Rajam Iyer and Mani Krishnaswamy

M.S.Subbulakshmi gave a recital accompanied by Savithri (violin) and K.V.Prasad (Mridangam) to the packed audience at the T.T.K. Auditorium.

Semmangudi Honoured

Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer Golden Jubilee Trust celebrated the 89th birthday of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer at Madras recently.

Semmangudi advised youngsters to give importance in spelling out swaras or the sahitya while performing. He pointed out that melody should reign supreme in music.

Violin vidwan M.S. Anantharaman was falicitated by K.V. Narayana Swamy for his dedicated service to music.

Later Papanasam Ashok Ranani gave a vocal concert.

Agenda for August and September

August 20 to 22: Chembai's Centenary Celebrations
Venue: Bangalore Gayana Samaja

Sri Subbaramaiah Fine Art Trust

August 25: P.S. Vasantha (vocal), S. Chandrasekhar (violin), Renuka Prasad (mridangam and B.R. Ravikumar (ghatam).
Venue: Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, N.R.Colony, Bangalore.

August 26: Navagraha Kritis by S.Shankar, R.S. Ramakanth, T.S. Sahavathy and R.N.Srilatha
Venue: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore

Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha

at the Music Academy, Madras.
Sep 15, 96 : Concert by Hyderabad Sisters.

Sep 22, 96 : Saxophone concert by Mangalore K. Anantha Ram. R.Raghuram (violin), S.Subbarao (mridangam) and Dayananda Mohite (ghatam).

Venue: Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Malleswaram, Bangalore.

Percussive Arts Centre Bangalore Youth Wing

Sep 6, 96 : Sarvatham (Flute), Jyotsana Manjunath (violin), T.N. Ramesh (mridangam), A.S. Kumar (Kanjira).

Sep 7, 96 : V.Shankaranarayan (vocal), V.Prema (violin), B.R. Srinivas (mridangam), G. Omkar (ghata).

Sep 8, 96 : Karaikudi Subramanyam (veena), Sankari Krishnan (vocal support), K.S. Sudhaman (mridangam).

Sep 9, 96 : Srikanthan Nagendra Sastri (vocal), Charulatha (violin), N.S. Mahesh (mridangam), S. Prashanth (kanjira).

Sep 10, 96 : Srivardhini (vocal), Maheshwara Sastri (mridangam), R.N. Prathap (ghata).

Venue : Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, N.R.Colony, Bangalore.

Bangalore Gayana Samaja

August 20 : Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar Centenary Celebration. Kadri Gopalnath (saxophone), A. Kanyakumari (violin), Guruvayur Dorai (mridangam), Paldhar K.V.S. Ramani (ghatam) and B. Rajashekar (morching). 6-00 pm.

August 21: Neyveli Santhanagopalan (vocal), S. Varadarajan (violin) and T.K. Murthy (mridangam), 6-00 pm.

August 22: Karnatak Jazz interaction, 6-00 pm.

August 25: Basavanagudi G Nataraj and N. Sunitha (violin duet), Vasudeva Rao (mridangam), Dayananda Mohite (ghatam) and N. Amrit (kanjira), 6-00 pm.

September 1: Sugama Sangitha by

Y.K. Muddu Krishna and Party, 4-15 pm.

September 8: Vocal concert by Soumya and party, 4-15 pm.

September 21: AIR Radio Sangeetha Sammelana concert before invited audience. K.J. Jose and party, Dilruba and Palai C.K. Ramachandran and party, vocal, 6-00 pm.

September 22: R.P. Shastry and party, Hindusthani violin and Mani Prasad and party Hindusthani vocal, 6-00 pm.

Devagiri Sangitha Sabha, Bsk II Stage, Bangalore.

September 29: Vocal Concert by Geetha Raja and party.

Sangeet Samanvaya

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy organised "Sangeetha Samanvaya", festival on the adaptation of Western music instruments to Carnatic music at the Bhavan premises recently.

Raja Ramanna, renowned scientist inaugurated the festival. B.V.K. Sastry, noted critic and V. Doreswamy Iyengar spoke on Western musical instruments.

C. Ramadas on piono, H.S. Anasuya on Indonesian instrument, Anklung and M.V. Nagendrappa on Cello participated in the festival which concluded with a jugalbandi by Kadri Gopalnath (saxophone) and Narasimhulu Vadavatti (clarinet). M.A. Krishna Murthy (mridangam), Vishwanath Nakod (tabla) and B. Rajashekar (morching) accompanied them.

Efforts of H.S. Suresh in executing this unique event is laudable.

Correction

RMV Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore will conduct music concerts on the last Sundays of every month and not on last Friday as mentioned in May 96 PHOENIX.

Mid-season Musical Marvel

N.Sundarraj



Lalgudi G Jayaraman inaugurating the Mid-Season Music Marvel

Mid-season Musical Marvel, a four day festival of music, jointly organised by Karnataka College of Percussion of Bangalore and Balaganamrutham, Madras was inaugurated by Violin Maestro Lalgudi G. Jayaraman on the evening of July 27 at the Narada Gana Sabha (Mini Hall) Madras amidst a packed audience.

V. Krishnan, General Manager, Indian Telephone Industries, Bangalore, in his inaugural address lauded the efforts of Vidwan T.A.S. Mani of KCP and Balasubramanyam of Balaganamrutham for organising such a festival in Madras. He offered his auditorium at Egmore for this festival next year free of cost.

B.V.K. Sastry noted art, music and dance critic of Bangalore said that he knew Mani as Master Mani, Vidwan Mani, Guru Mani and organiser Mani. He called upon musicians to inculcate the interest amongst youngsters. He hoped that this festival would serve as a bridge between the entire sphere of Carnatic Music.

Earlier Balasubramanyam presented the invocation and welcome address.

The festival commenced with the vocal recital of Deepa and Divya accompanied by Suresh Babu (violin), Thiruvaidaimuruthur Sankaran (Mridangam) and Narasimhan (Ghatam).

Later followed by a vocal concert by O.S. Thiagarajan supported by M. Chandrasekharan (Violin),

Umayalapuram Sivaraman (Mridangam) and E.M. Subramanyam (Ghatam).

Next day evening M.S. Vidya of Bangalore gave a vocal concert accompanied by Tiruvarur M. Balan (Violin), Nagai Narayanan (Mridangam) and Madipakkam Murali (Ghatam).

Bangalore Ramamani's vocal concert which followed later was accompanied by M.A. Krishnaswami (Violin), Tanjore Kumar (Mridangam) and T.D. Balasubramaniam (Ghatam).

N. Pattabhiraman, editor-in-chief of Sruti who was the chief guest said the fusion between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu was welcome. "Many musicians from all over the world yearn to perform in Madras in the season" he concluded.

Bangalore K. Venkatram, the renowned percussionist from Bangalore, who is also the director of Percussive Arts Centre, lucidly explained the intricate Chandas talas used in the Tiruppugazh. This was followed by Tala Tarangini by Karnataka College of Percussion directed by Vidwan T.A.S. Mani.



M.S.Vidya gave a vocal concert



Tala Tarangini by Karnataka College of Percussion of Bangalore

Anuradha Suresh Krishna Murthy, daughter of K.V. Narayanaswamy gave a vocal performance later. She was accompanied by Varadarajan (Violin), Kallidaikurichi S. Sivakumar (mridangam) and Ravi Chandran (Ghatam).

R. Krishnaswamy, Secretary of Narada Gana Sabha, who was the chief guest appreciating the efforts of K.C.P and Balaganamrutham in this venture offered the sabha hall at a nominal rent for their future programmes.

Curtains came down on the last day of the festival with Vidya of Madras singing to the accompaniments of Padma (violin), B. Jayanth (mridangam) and Ramdas (Ghatam).

The main concert of the evening was by Tirthur V. Ramachandran (Vocal) accompanied by M. Chandrasekharan (Violin) T.A.S. Mani (mridangam) and Pudukottai M. Ramachandran (Ghatam).

Maithreyi Ramadurai, secretary of Music Academy, Madras was the chief guest.

It is hoped that in the succeeding years musical marvel would induct more artistes of Karnataka than providing a platform to those whose opportunities aplenty. ■

TALATARANGINI

Bangalore K.Venkataram

Introducing T.A.S. Mani and the Karnataka College of Percussion, (KCP) Bangalore, Bangalore K Venkataram traced that T.A.S. Mani's KCP was the first such institution to offer tutitioning in percussion in Karnataka.

The first percussion ensemble, Tala Tarangini, formed by Mani included the usual concert instruments - mridanga, ghata, kanjira, morching etc. Later additions were dholak, thavil (dolu) khol etc. It is to the credit of Mani that he has performed in several countries abroad and cut several recordings with jazz and trumpets with his troupe and wife R.A. Ramamani.

The author recalled the attempts of his own Percussive Arts Centre (PAC) to draw attention of music lovers to identify the independent personality of laya vadyas, is differ-

ent from the scope and limitations as accompaniment which is exclusively a supporting role. Several lecdems by scholar musicians like Lalgudi Jayaraman, Umayalapuram Sivaraman, T.K. Murthy, Trichy Sankaran, Karaikkudi Mani, Nikhil Ghosh, under the auspices of the PAC highlighting the intricacies of laya and allied topics were referred to.

Similar to exclusive pakhwaj and tabla solo recitals in Hindustani music festivals, solo items of maestro Palghat Mani Iyer, Palghat Raghu and others were broadcast over the AIR in the National Programme and the Radio Sangeetha Sammelans. Exclusive compositions have been attempted by artistes like Vijaya Rahava Rao, Gnyan Prakash Ghosh, Sivaraman, T.K. Murthy, Karaikkudi Mani, Bangalore Venkataram, Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma and others.

In this background, the laya vinyasa by exclusive laya vadyas played for quite an infrequent eleven-beat cycle was introduced.

Tracing the origins - Sama Veda to music as per Bharatha, Thaala kriyas like Anu Dhrutha, Dhrutha and Laghu owe their origin to the "Hastha Vinyasa" of rendering "Veda Paata". Mathanga, Sarangadeva and others have discussed the "Chandas" in "Sangeetha Saastra".

In total, thaala is to gaana, what chandas is to kaavya. Every language has its own "Chandas gathi". Sanskrit chandas did not continue in the chandas of other languages. Each language has its own "Guna" - bhaasha uchaarana, depending on the "Swara Bhaara" of that bhaasha. We can identify taala and laya in the chandas of every language.

"Thiruppugazhs" (Deva Stuthi) of Arunagirinathar are songs rendered by divine inspiration in praise of Lord Subrahmanya Swami (Muruga). Arunagirinathar lived in the times of Proudha Deva Raya who ruled Vijayanagar between 1424 - 46. He was an incomparable master of rhythm in Indian music. He blazed a new trail, not only in rhythm, but in the compositions of a unique genus of devotional music called "Thiruppugazhs".

No music scholar has yet identified all the taalas figuring in Thiruppugazhs. Many taalas in the "Chandas" meters of these Thiruppugazhs defy classification. There are songs in the usual 35 taala scheme. But even in the 108 taala scheme, 52 taala scheme, Navasandhi taala scheme and several others. Then there are several taalas which do not fall under any of these known thala classifications.

Thus, Thiruppugazh is a vast ocean of intricate sophisticated time measurers and studies made so far have only touched the fringe of the problem.

In the prevalent 35-taala scheme, there are no taalas of 19 or 31 counts whereas all other measures can be manipulated by the combination of kalais, nadais etc.

The 11 beat cycle chosen for the laya vinyasa has three taalas in the Sulaadi taala scheme (Sankeerna Rupaka = 2+9, Misra Thripata = 7+4 and Thrisra Dhruva = 3+2+3+3). But the operation of this time measure, ie the "Kriya" is what makes the structure uneasy. This 11-beat cycle was rendered by the noted thavil artiste Haridwaramangalam A.K.Palanivel in the thavil wizard Needamangalam Meenakshisundaram Pillai (14th Thaala Vaadyothsava in 1995).

The intricacy lay in the operation of the "Visarjitha" (wave) used: the measures are (4 counts + Beat + Beat and Wave = 6 1/2) and (3 Beats + Beat and Wave = 4 1/2) totalling 11.

A Thiruppugazh and the mnemonics used and rendered by Alathoor Brothers with Lalgudi Jayaraman and Palghat Mani Iyer from the AIR recordings were vocally rendered and explained. There are several chandas - Thiruppugazhs of 5 1/2 counts to a cycle with different denominations (1 1/2 + 1 1/2 + 2 1/2, 2 + 2 + 1 1/2, 2 1/2 + 1 1/2 + 1 1/2, 2 + 1 1/2 + 2, 1 1/2 + 2 + 2) published in the "Thiruppugazh, Isai Vazhipaadu" by Thiruppugazh Anbargal, New Delhi - 57 in 1993.

The laya vinyasa of 11-beats chosen for the day is operated as 4 counts and a Khanda Chapu (6 1/2) and 2 counts and a Khanda Chapu (4 1/2) played individually, later adopting the "Koraippu", building up a finale, customary in Thalavadya Laya Vinyasa.

The introductions was provided by Vidwan Venkataram to the Laya Vinyasa of KCP's TALATARA-NGINI at the four-day "Mid-Season Music Marvel" at Madras on July 27, 1996.

The event was made doubly significant by the presence, in the select audience, renowned percussionists, Palghat Raghu and Umayalapuram Sivaraman, besides the violin maestro, Lalgudi G Jayaraman.

At the conclusion, all the three stalwarts paid handsome tributes to T.A.S. Mani who had conceived and presented the unique ensemble.

Brinda Passes Away

Renowned Carnatic vocalist, T. Brinda passed away on August 6, at Madras following a brief illness. She was 84.

Brinda, who was the grand daughter of Veena Dhanammal, was the recipient of President Puraskar award, Sangeet Natak Academy's National award, Sangeetha Kalanidhi, Sangeeta Sikhamani and President's Swarna Kamal. She was the recipient of the Fellowship in music of the Union Government for her outstanding contribution to Carnatic music. She was a professor of music in Tamil Nadu Government Music College.

Apart from learning music from her grand mother, Brinda had learnt from Kanjeevaram Nayana Pillai.

She was well known for her famous rendition of padams and javalis in Carnatic music and along with her sister Muktha formed a famous duo in classical music in the 1950s setting a special trend in music recitals. Many young musicians have greatly benefited by her guidance and teaching.

She is survived by two sons and a daughter, Veghahani.

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In Lighter Vein

Nayikas -Then and Now

Manu Vijay



Shringara Rasa, or the sentiment of love and its myriad shades, is the life-blood of Indian classical dances. While the Rasa or emotion remains the same, its attitudes, concepts and manifestations have changed with the times.

The young dancer today, is a far cry from the shy, demure nayika she has to portray, and would boldly walk out of a dishonest relationship rather than bear the indignity of being cheated. Small wonder, dancers can

do little justice to their abhinaya numbers !

Take for example, the Vasakasajja, waiting for her date, swathed in the finest mirror-works, the highest of heels and a Chanel perfume, ready for the kill. If the date; (in this case, the nayaka) doesn't quite make it, well, the loss is all his. Our Vipralabda nayika would probably make it on her own for the movie she always wanted to see, or join her cronies at the pub for a drink.

While the basic emotions of jeal-

ousy, envy and rage at betrayal remain the same, their expressions vary a great deal. The teenager of the MTV generation is a woman of action, and rather than languishing in a bower of sweet scented flowers, our Virahotkantitha nayika would dump her young man without another word, or march up to him and give him the tight slap he much deserves.

The Swiya nayika (the wife for those ignorant), whose husband is a cheat, would, if she is an Uttama, pack his things neatly in his leather suitcases and leave them outside the door to be picked up at will first. A not-so-Uttama nayika would seize the opportunity to return the affections of the colleague in her office and send him E-mail filled with innuendo.

The Khandita would fling every object within reach at the unsuspecting nayaka, the sharper the object, the better. The Kalahantarita is of course, made of sterner stuff. Cry, she might not out of remorse, but usually to find a 'broader' shoulder to lean on, for, move on, she must. The Abhisarika would never, and I mean never, even in her wildest dreams set out in search of her man. If he, in all humility were to make the first, second and third moves in a bid to salvage the relationship, our nayika would think seriously in terms of a thirty page pre-nuptial agreement. Wedded bliss, for a Swadina pathika nayika experiencing 'sambhoga', does not translate to sandal paste and moonlight. Today's lady expects a trip for two to the Maldives with a Tanishq watch thrown in as an expression of undying love.

Confident, educated, street smart, worldly wise and above all assertive how can this pretty young thing perform a 'Maathada Baaradeno' ?

Tuneful Encounters -7

Lords of the Strings

S.N.Sivaswamy

The inimitable Mysore T. Chowdiah had among his many disciples, an extraordinarily talented duo posted as Staff Artists in All India Radio, Madras, where I started my career. They were R.K. Venkatarama Sastry and V. Sethuramiah. Both were, like me, Kannadigas, a fact which drew us together.

We were always speaking to one another in Kannada, attracting snide remarks from others (who could not conceal their envy) like "Oh! The Kannada birds have flocked together again!"

I was incharge of music, English and the few Kannada programmes of the station, though the attention given by the authorities to Kannada was rather perfunctory. There was a fortnightly Kannada play to be broadcast with a meagre budget, so meagre that I had to manage the show with the help of all possible free sources of voices including engineering officers knowing Kannada.

I used to request both Venkatarama Sastry and Sethuramiah to lend their voices in these Kannada plays. As they understood my budgetary constraints, they participated in this extra-curricular duty without protest.

While Venkatarama Sastry was at home with Kannada, and did not need much practice for rendering his lines, Sethuramiah, who had his schooling in Tamil, required some time to master them. When I faced any problem while producing musical features, it was to one of them that I promptly ran for advice.

Venkatarama Sastry and Sethuramiah were among the most sought after violinists of the day, frequently accompanying Ariyakudi, Semmangudi, Madurai Mani, G.N.B and the rest, not only in the AIR studios but at public concerts as well. Although both were disciples of the same guru, they had developed different individual styles of playing. Venkatarama Sastry played on the traditional five-stringed instrument while Sethuramiah had a seven-stringed instrument.

Both were perfect in whatever they rendered, but a discerning listener could trace a strict adherence to formality in Venkatarama Sastry and a desire for experimentation on the part of Sethuramiah. At the same time one agreed that both were melody incarnate with their fine, faultless technique.

One also noticed a behavioral difference between the duo. Venkatarama Sastry was soft spoken, reserved and mild mannered, while Sethuramiah was an extrovert freely indulging in conversation. They differed in looks too. Venkatarama Sastry was tall, dark and had the front of his head shaved and the rest of his hair gathered into a knot behind his head. Sethuramiah was short, fair, and had all his hair combed back into a tuft.

In those days, I had a fascination for the style of playing popularised by a particular school of North Indian violinists. They displayed a sort of nonchalance as they climaxed each piece they played with a blitzkrieg of cascading note in 'ati-drut' tempo.

It was this adroitness that had me spell-bound, wondering at the finger-ing skill of the players. Once Venkatarama Sastry and I were sitting in the studio lounge listening to one such violin performance on the loud speaker. I remarked, why one never found this thrilling virtuosity among violinists of the south. Venkatarama Sastry's reply was quiet, assured. He said any mature violinist could achieve that kind of effect, but in Carnatic music, melody mattered more than speed.

He took me to the studios and disillusioned me with a demonstration of the very gimmicks that had "thrilled" me till then!

Ganakala Shree for Mridangist

The awardee of the title, "Ganakala Shree", of the youth wing of Karnataka Ganakala Parishath, this year is C. Chaluviah (42), a mridangist of Bangalore.

This is the first time that a percussionist has been chosen for this title. This was decided at a meeting of the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat held at Ananya, Malleswaram, Bangalore recently.

Other names which figured prominently were: Veena vidwan D. Balakrishna (41, who missed last year also), mridangist T.S. Chandrashekar (42) and vocalist R.N. Srilatha (42).

Contribution of Haridasas to Music

R.K.Srikantan

To us, Music is seldom a matter of idle luxury. Music training formed an indispensable subject of royal education. Many were the rulers of Karnataka who were profound scholars in the theory and practice of this art. Many of them have written scholarly musical treatises and have bequeathed an imperishable legacy of such treatises to posterity. The royal patronage to music has been a continuous process in Karnataka.

Matanga (6th, 7th century AD), Sarangadeva (c.1230 AD), Parshvadeva (c.1310 AD), Kallinatha (c.1450 AD), Vidyananya (c.1360 AD), the trinity of the 16th century, Karnataka-Nijaguna Shivayogi (c.1520 AD), Pundarika Vittala and Ramamatya (c.1550. AD) Somanatha, Govinda Dikshita, have all played important roles in the evaluation of the theoretical framework of music. Most of the important compositional patterns of today, such as the *kirtana*, *varna*, *tillana* and *javali* are traceable to Kannada *Geya Prabandhas* which have been described by Matanga, Sarangadeva, Haripala, Kallinatha and others.

The classification of *melas* and *ragas* on scientific principles was left to Venkatamakhin, who was also a Kannadiga, to give shape to them in his famous *Chaturdandi Prakasika* in

about 1620 AD. He fixed the maximum number of *Melas* that were possible and his scheme remains unchallenged. King Tulajaji of Tanjore followed this scheme by writing his

"The contributions of Kannadigas to South Indian music and musicology have earned the gratitude of all the musicians and music lovers of our country. The Kannadigas have laboured unceasingly in all the fields of Carnatic music, so that the epithet "Karnataka Sangeeta" has come to describe forever, the music system of South India. So far as Carnatic music is concerned, it is the composers of Karnataka who enunciated and stabilised by illustrative practice, the canons of Karnataka Sangeeta as well as the formative and directive principles determining its aesthetic and physical structure", says the writer.

Sangeeta Samruta in about 1735 A.D. and he closely followed the scheme of Venkatamakhin. During the time of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Shyama Sastry, the 72 *Mela Karta* scheme had become an accepted system and Dikshitar in particular composed his songs in the new *Mela* system of Venkatamakhin.

The unbroken line of the Haridasa movement of combining music with bhakti, continued till the middle of the 19th century, the last two of this *Dasa Kuta* being Gopaladasa and Jagannathadasa. In Tanjore also, many of the court musicians were Kannadigas and the most important of these was Pachimiriam Adiyappayya

who was a contemporary of King Tulaja. Adiyappayya composed many *varnas* and *kritis* with the Mudra "Venkataramana". His son, Krishnayya, was a great Veena Player and an Adept in Tala. Mysore Sadashiva Rao was a younger contemporary of Tyagaraja. He belonged to Tyagaraja's direct *sisya parampara*, being a disciple of *Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar*, a direct disciple of Tyagaraja. Among the modern composers in Karnataka, mention must be made of Veena Seshanna and Vasudevacharya. A few classical Kannada poets like Ponna, Ranna, Nagachandra, Rudra Bhatta, Nemichandra, Ratnakaravarni, etc. have also enriched Carnatic Music through their works.

The Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti Movement in India, particularly in Karnataka, has to be viewed in its historical perspective in order to gauge its strength and weakness in the cultural life of our country. The era of Islamic ascendancy between 1001 to 1707 A.D. has been called the medieval period in Indian history. Large parts of India came under the rule of Islam. Culturally, it was a period of stagnation.

However, music entered a new phase with the advent of Islam. Balban and Raziya, were great patrons of music. Amir Khusrav was not only a musician but also an authority on the music of his time. He has described in detail the contemporary singers and various instruments in his writings. He was responsible for combining many Persian and Indian melodies. Some scholars feel that he invented the Sitar by combining the Indian Veena and the Persian Tambura. Anyhow, the Sitar is the product of the genius of the Indo-Muslim musicians. Similarly, the Indian mridanga, was modified to evolve the tabla. In the court of Jaunpur, the *Kheyal*, a style of Hindustani music developed. The Gwalior school was evolved under the patronage of Raja Mansingh of Gwalior who wrote "Manakutuhil", a work on music. Mansingh revived the *Drupad* style of Hindustani music and Baiji was a great singer at his court. *Qawali*, *Thumri* and *Ghazal* became popular in India due to the efforts of Muslim singers.

In the South, Carnatic Music was evolved in Vijayanagara. Vidyaranya is believed to be the originator of this school. Ramamatya and Purandara-dasa helped in its development.

On the ruins of the destroyed South Indian Hindu States was founded the Empire of Vijayanagar. It originated in 1336 on the banks of the Tungabhadra largely through the efforts of two energetic Hindu youths, Harihara and Bukka. Vijayanagar was responsible for all-round progress in the field of religion and fine arts. The peace and prosperity fostered by the Empire helped to further cultural activities. The Empire also extended generous patronage to all these pursuits. Rightly, the Empire has been regarded as representing the "synthesis of South Indian Culture".

Bhakti Cult and Movement

The growth of the Bhakti cult was a natural reaction to the spread of Islam. It consisted of a loving devo-

tion to one God and it is considered as one of the ways of realising God. Bhakti cult was very ancient and the *Bhagavad Gita* preaches such a devotion. But it assumed great importance in the medieval ages in an attempt to safeguard Hindu Dharma. The cult is essentially monotheistic in the sense that though the devotees worship Siva or Krishna or Devi, they stand for one God.

Bhakti cult was revived first in South India due to the efforts of Saivite and Vaishnavite saints. Ramanuja, Vibhaditya, Basava and Madhva popularised this cult. The spread of the *Bhakti* cult from the South to the North was heralded by its early flowering in Maharashtra, which lies midway. That the Hindu society had not completely lost its vigour and vitality was made clear by the rise of this movement which helped to meet the problems raised by religious crisis.

Bhakti, intense devotion, is one of the three paths to attaining salvation according to Hindu belief. The other two courses are *jnana* and *karma*. The cult of *bhakti* flowered in the epics and the puranas and through them evolved a popular movement. Leaders of the bhakti movement were mystic saints. The cult of bhakti formed the vital part of the religious culture of Karnataka. The rule of the Kalachuri Bijjala is important for the revival of Saivism in the new form called Veerasaivism or Lingayatism. Basava was the greatest exponent of this new form of Veerasaivism. He preached his religion in the language of the region. The doctrines of bhakti have already been propounded in the Upanishads. But much emphasis began to be laid on bhakti movement in the 11th and 12th centuries AD. This continued for four centuries thereafter. There was then a lacunae of about a century. The 17th century witnessed a revival and then set in a decline. Thus, it spread over five centuries.

The unique character of the teachings of these Haridasas lies in the fact that they exerted powerful religious

influence on the mass consciousness. Their songs were composed in easy colloquial language in contrast with the authors of the Tamil Thevaram and Prabandham literature whose style was highly literary. The authors of these songs were well-versed in Sanskrit and Philosophy. The tenets, even the learned ones, were sung in simple and intelligible verses. They also differed from the Vaishnava lyricists of Bengal who indulged in erotic forms of personal devotion to God.

Bhakti through Music

The impact of music on human beings is intensely spiritual, aesthetic and emotional. The former predominates in classical music and the latter in other varieties, which may be described as LCM (Light Classical Music). The essential characteristic of classical music is its concern with technique governed by the rules and conventions of the art, the enforcement of the grammatical discipline and the achievement of a total effect which yields an aesthetic satisfaction in the listener. The Haridasas of Karnataka were the pioneers in South India in spreading bhakti through music by composing songs in the form of kirtanas, suladis, ugabhogas, etc. The secret of the popularity of their compositions lay in the fact that they were couched in Kannada which could be understood by the masses. The trend in composition between the era of Sarangadeva and the popular kirtanakaras who made enduring contributions in the regional languages from about the 14th to the 18th centuries, was largely a movement away from the dominance of an intricate variety of rigid classical forms, towards freedom in expression, a simplification in structure and the deliberate use of music to project the thought of the song-maker. The ramifications of the prabandha with its six angas, and their innumerable permutation were gradually getting replaced by a new harmony in fashioning the basic designs in the art of compositions. The old order could be

seen in this long period of transition, yielding place to a new one which transformed the shape of the composition in a wonderful variety of ways, giving rise to a charming profusion of new forms in response to the urges of creative art.

The kirtana form was congenial to the new requirements and its intensive application led up to the kritis and padams of the great masters on the one side and also, in another direction, to the development of song-types which came to be employed as hand-maids of expression in a devotional setting, dramatic narration and dialogue thus heightening the element of entertainment. It was in this manner that the javali, the tillanna, the taranga, devarnama and ragamalika emerged to enrich the resources of Carnatic music. Madhavacharya brought the cult of bhakti to perfection by propagating his theory of dvaita. His philosophy was developed by his immediate disciples.

The Role of Haridasas

During the Vijayanagar period, the Dasakuta began to flourish and eminent devotees like Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa were some of the prominent personalities of the kuta. The Haridasas of Karnataka belong to the holy lineage of wandering mendicant ascetics for whom our country has been justly as famous from time immemorial as for her religious myths and legends. The bhakti movement in Karnataka was essentially a Madhva movement. Mainly drawing inspiration from the teachings of the Acharyas, these saints tried to make Hindu religion popular by singing songs of devotion at the doors of the rich and the poor alike. The Haridasas were also believers in the value of Nama Sankirtana or the efficacy of meditation by means of the name of the Lord as a means to attain salvation.

The works of the Haridasas are varied and numerous. The number of their songs available to us runs to many thousands. They are

characterised by a happy blend of music and poetry. They composed songs in a variety of meters, viz., *Pada, suladi, Ugabhoga, Tatva, Suvali, Sloka, Kanda, Vachana, Gadya, Seesapadya, Vritta, Dvipadi, Tripadi, Chaupadi, Saptadi, Ashtapadi, Ragale, Yalapada*, etc. The Haridasas were first and foremost the followers of Vittala or Panduranga. The names of nearly 200 Haridasas are known, including female Haridasas. The works of the Haridasas of Karnataka constitute a magnificent collection of songs known as Dasarapada or Devarnama. Starting with Narahari Tirtha in the 13th century down to Jagannathadasa in the 18th century, these saintly bards enriched not only the bhakti literature of our country but also made substantial contributions to our musical system. Purandaradasa is the most celebrated amongst them. His works are marked by a charming and scintillating excellence of sahitya and sangeeta and they stand out as typical examples of the devarnama group of compositions.

Devaranama Kirtanas

The devarnama kirtana consists of the *pallavi*, the *anupallavi* and usually several charanas set in popular ragas and talas. The musical arrangement is easy and fluent and the rendering concentrates on the portrayal of the inherent bhava. Each Dasa is distinguished by his own independent title or mudra. Among these Haridasas, Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa hold a prominent place in the cultural history of Karnataka. Both of them were saints and literary geniuses. Purandaradasa was a master of the theory and practice of the science of music, a religious teacher and a humanist. It was given to him to consolidate the Dasakutta and ensure its continuity in the social life of his countrymen. It is the spirit and the moving qualities of the compositions of these great saints that make them universally respected and immortal.

Purandaradasa's Contribution

At the hands of Purandaradasa, these compositions reached the acme of perfection and attained the status of classical music compositions which served as models even to giants like Tyagaraja. Thus, they formed the most significant corpus of musical compositions in the history of Carnatic Music.

Purandaradasa is revered as the *Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha*. This appellation is indicative of his connection with the development of Carnatic music, because not with standing the absence of any written record, this appellation has been in use for generations. But very little material is available about his association with music or contribution, if any, in its development. And the reason for this is, for generations, Purandaradasa has been revered more as a saint than as a composer. And also very little attention was paid by his spiritual heirs to the musical merits of his songs. As a consequence, much of the music of his songs is lost and we are left only with the skeletons of their word structures.

In addition to this, there is also another belief that Purandaradasa was responsible for devising the present-day preliminary training lessons in music. While a couple of *Geetas* attributed to him are available, no *prabandha* or *thaya* said to have been composed by him are available. We have of course a large number of *suladi, ugabhoga, pada* and *padya*. Music has been utilised by Purandaradasa and others to intensify the beauty of the structure and the sentiment behind the songs. As such, there are no compositions exclusively in praise of sangeetha. But Purandaradasa brought into practice the scheme of *pallavi, anupallavi* and *charana* of a musical composition. Nearly 30 songs contain reference to music including instruments and the qualifications of musicians etc.

In one particular songs, he mentions many instruments that were in vogue in his times, like the *tambura kombu, flute*, etc. This spiritual excel-

lence of music is stressed in *ugabhoga* where reference is made to the *tambura*, *tala*, *gejje* and singing and their importance in leading to *moksha*. In one of his *suladis*, he alludes to *mandara*, *madhya* and *tala sthayis*.

Numerous references to ragas, possibly in vogue during his times, have been made by Purandaradasa in some of his songs. For instance, mention is made of the ragas, *Ramakri*, *Gundakri* and *Maharanjini Ahiri*, *Kambhoji*, *Gurjari*, *Gundakriya*, *Deshakshi*, *Shankarabaranam*, *Sri Bhoopali*, *Bhairavi*, *Vasantha*, etc. and also the ragas that came later, like *Kalyani*, *Paadi*, *Poorivikalyani*, *Gowri* and *Saranga*. Ragas like *Kalyani* and *Darbar* with Persian influence were popularised by the Dasas. The *suladi sapta talas* were perfected and brought into practice. Purandaradasa has emphasised the necessity of a good voice for the vocalist. It will be clear from the study of the songs that he was a very leaned musician. To him, we owe the initial systematisation of Carnatic Music, so much so, all the famous ragas of today bear the same complexion as they did in his time. As he was a master of both *lakshya* and *lakshana*, it was possible for him not only to give the correct shape to the raga but also to compose many a *kirtana* to serve as illustrations.

The Sangeeta Saramruta of Tulaja Maharaja gives numerous examples of Purandaradasa's *suladis* to illustrate raga features. The later composers have followed his patterns in raga delineation, structure and tempo, the three features which make the body and soul of a song. It is difficult to assess the authenticity of the tunes now attributed to Purandaradasa. There is no traceable lineage of disciples or notational script for the melodies.

The kirtanas, are, as a rule, simpler compositions, intended for group singing. Their main features are, firstly, the tunes are easy to sing and do not call for great expertise. Secondly, they are usually set within a single octave, thirdly, they have no

sangati embellishments, and fourthly, even where the charanams are a little difficult. The pallavi is always simple so that while the leader sings the charanams, the chorus can intone the pallavi at the conclusion of each of the couplets. The kirtanas are their appeal is a combined one, in equal measure of religious devotion and musical delight. One may say that while in the kriti, the words serve the song, in the kirtana, the tune serves the words. The whole credit of rescuing Karnataka Sangeeta from being corrupted due to foreign invasions, belongs to Purandaradasa. The main outlines of about all the ragas have been laid down by him in clear terms. Purandaradasa occupies the same position in Kannada literature which Tulsidas occupies in Hindi. They can hardly be surpassed so far as their literary ability and poetic genius are concerned. His songs are an imperishable part of the literary and musical heritage of Karnataka.

Vyasa Thirtha (14478-1538 AD) was the guru of Purandaradasa. He had Purandara, Venkatadasa, Kanaka, Vadiraja, Vijayendra and others as his disciples. Vadiraja (180-1600 AD) was a philosopher cum dasa; Ramagadya, Vaikunta varanane, Gundakriya, Lakshmisobhanahadu, *suladi* and *ugabhogas* are some of his compositions. His mudra is Hayavadana.

Kanaka Dasa

The next luminary in the galaxies of Dasas is Kanakadasa, a contemporary of Purandara. A shepherd by birth, he is an example like Vidura of the Mahabharata. Vyasaraja held him in great esteem. Mohana Tarangini, Haribhaktisara, Nalacharitre are some of his outstanding works. Kanaka Mundige is particular type of his compositions, "full of abstract imagery, subtlety of metaphysics and inscrutable implications". The mudrika of his compositions is Adikeshava.

Vijaya Dasa

Vijaya Dasa (1687-1765 AD) was a native of Chikalaparavi in Raichur

district. He suffered from extreme poverty and distress. His *suladis* are full of Sanskritisms. "So diverse are the themes" writes Dr M.V. Krishna Rao "So sublime is the spiritual content and so elegant and graceful is the expression of the compositions that among the Haridasas, Purandara and Vijayadasa stand prominent as most distinguished kirtanakaras."

Jagannatha Dasa

Most distinguished after Vijayadasa, was Jagannatha Dasa (1726-1809 AD), the author of Harikathamrtasara. It is a mine of information with many theological secrets, the sources of which are inscrutable. He is the last among the great Dasas in whom Vyasatva and Dasatva combined. He is the author of many *suladis* and *ugabhogas*. His mudrika is "Jagannatha Vittala".

It has been recognised that music, though often used for amusing sensual delights and pleasures, should subserve the function of bringing poise and order to the soul. Music has played an important role in social cohesion and integration through the ages in close association with feasts, dances, rituals and games. It is a more accurate and intimate mirror of the travails and victories of the lone human soul than any other fine-art. When thought is brought to bear on experience regarding the influence of art on the individual or the community, it becomes clear that the influence of art on the common good is a very real one.

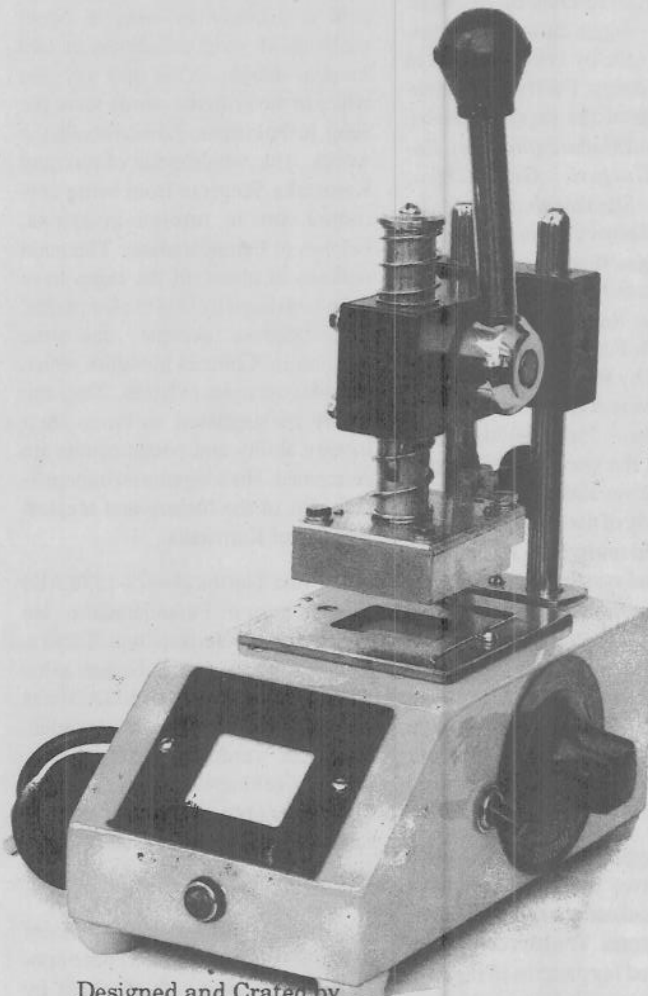
India abounds in music belonging to the realms of art-music, sacred-music, opera music, dance-music and folk-music. She is equally rich in art-dance, sacred-dance and folk-dance. The training of our sense discrimination and of intelligent appreciation of real qualities of arts is of paramount importance. Art is not just there to decorate our walls and to give easy pleasure. It wants to construct, to create new values, but there are times when in order to do so, it must destroy false values and clear building space.

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